

REMARKS

Summary of the Office Action & Formalities

Claims 1-8 are all the claims pending in the application. By this Amendment, Applicant is amending claim 1 and 3-8, and adding new claims 9 and 10. No new matter is added.

Applicant is submitting herewith form PTO/SB/08 listing two references that are not on the Examiner's form PTO-892 and that were originally listed on the International Search Report ("ISR") in the international phase of this application. A copy of the ISR and cited references should have been provided by the International Bureau and already considered by the Examiner. Applicant is submitting form PTO/SB/08 to have these references listed on the face of the patent that issues from this application.

The drawings are objected to for not showing the stopper and gaskets recited in claim 7. Applicant is submitting a replacement sheet for Figs. 1 and 2 that adds schematic representations of these features. The Examiner is kindly requested to approve and enter these replacement sheets.

The abstract of the disclosure is objected to for minor informalities. Applicant is amending the abstract of the disclosure to overcome this objection.

The Examiner has also objected to the specification and included what appears to be a form language setting forth the preferred layout for the specification. Applicant is amending the specification to conform with general USPTO practice. Regarding the spacing of the lines, Applicant believes that the current spacing is correct and does not present any difficulty in reading or electronic scanning.

The prior art rejections are summarized as follows:

1. Claims 1 and 2 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Feingold et al. (US 5,772,666).
2. Claims 3-5 and 7-8 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Feingold et al. in view of Hjertman et al. (US 6,558,395).

Applicant respectfully traverses.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 102

Applicant has amended claim 1 to include portions of the limitations recited in claim 3, thereby rendering moot the rejection of claim 1 in view of Feingold et al. alone. Accordingly, only the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) in view of Feingold et al. and Hjertman et al. remains.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 103

The Examiner's rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) relies in part on Hjertman et al. (US 6,558,395) for the feature of a plurality of fingers, which the Examiner acknowledges is absent from Feingold et al.

Hjertman et al. has a filing date of November 30, 2000, which is *after* Applicant's PCT filing date of February 21, 2000, and its foreign priority date of February 22, 1999. Therefore, Hjertman et al. is not applicable prior art reference and should be removed from consideration by the Examiner.

New Claims

For additional claim coverage merited by the scope of the present invention, Applicant is adding new claims 9 and 10. These claims are believed to be allowable at least by reason of their respective dependencies.

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,



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